

Addictions Are Not Your Real Problem

part 3b

Finding Your Purpose: God's Lion Kings

The heavens, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth He has given to the children of men (Ps 115:16).

Drug lords: the rod of God's correction

The biggest, best organized, and richest crime organization in history was the Cali Drug Cartel, responsible for 90 percent of the cocaine shipped around the world. Several books tell the story of its collapse, brought about by one of its top men, Jorge Salcedo, whose only way out was to use his connections on the inside to work with U.S. and Colombian agents. (Cali Cartel: *Wikipedia.org*) (Job 21:30; Pr 16:4; Rom 9:22; 2 Pet 2:3, 9)

But most who've read or heard about it have no idea what *enabled* him to accomplish this risky operation, which should have gotten him killed. That story is told in a book and its video documentary which I show at jail and prison. It started in Cali with pastor Julio Ruibal, who followed his burden to get the other pastors to join together in united prayer. 25,000 people attended the first of many all-night city-wide prayer vigils (which later grew to 65,000), and forty-eight hours later "a 24-hour period passed without a single person being killed" in a city with "the highest homicide rate in the world," where "as many as 15 people a day were killed," mostly cartel related.

That summer "the Colombian government declared all-out war against the drug lords." "Over the next four months, 900 cartel-linked officers were fired from the metropolitan police force." And by August "Colombian authorities had captured all seven targeted cartel leaders." including "founders Gilberto and Miguel Rodriguez [Orejuela]." God allowed these crime lords, who sought wisdom from the demonic world of the occult, to rule unchecked until His own people decided *enough is enough* and took the authority He'd already given us 2,000 years ago through Christ. (Eph 1:17-23; Col 1:16-17; 2:9-15)

This is a sample of God's people doing what we were called to do—take dominion over the earth. In this case, *reclaiming* the dominion Satan stole from us at the Fall of man in Genesis three. (Gen 1:26, 28; ch 3; Lu 4:6; Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph 2:2; 6:12; Col 2:15; 1 Jn 5:19; Dan 7:26-7)

There are four kinds of people, a sign read: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, those who wonder what's happening, and those who don't know anything's happening. (1 Ki 17:1; Am 3:7; Jn 15:15)

God created Adam with a job assignment: take dominion over the earth. That is, *make things happen* for the benefit of "every living thing that moves on the earth," beginning with the animals. When He called Abraham about 3800 years ago, He told him he would be "a father of many nations," kings would come from him, and "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him" (Gen 1:26, 28; 17:1-6; 18:18).

There's a right way and a wrong way to make things happen. False religions and dictators may use intimidation and force. God's way is through those who, filled with His love, lay down their lives in serving others as a (good) father does his children, as a shepherd his sheep, and as a priest his

people. (Jn 10:11; 1 Cor 4:15; Eph 5:2; 6:4)

Our destiny is more than enjoying heaven: we are called to be "a royal priesthood, a holy nation," "kings and priests," reigning with Christ "in life," even now. It's the "Kingdom of God" *within* us. (Mt 6:33; 12:28; Lu 17:21; Act 2; Rom 5:17; 10:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 2 Tim 2:2; Rev 5:10; 20:4, 6)

The real kings

Hebrews two opens with a warning not to neglect or get slack concerning this "great salvation." God's Kingdom is already here, and learning to walk in it and *overcome* the flesh and the devil is practice and preparation for our *future* role as "a kingdom of priests," ruling the world through understanding, wisdom, and compassion, by the power of the Spirit. (Pr 8; Dan 7:18, 22, 27; Ps 149:5-9; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; Heb. 5:1f; 12:1f; Ex. 19:6, Rev. 1:6; 12:11) (Emphasis mine throughout)

God made man "a little lower than the angels," but that's temporary. Look at our future: "You have crowned him with glory and honor, and *set him over the works of Your hands*. You have put *all things* in subjection under his feet. . . . He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him." (Heb. 2:7-8; Ps 8:4-6)

When you add "the whole creation" from Romans 8:19-22, we've got the whole universe in our hands—His *and* ours. But that's only the second reason He created us. The first is *fellowship*, which is why dominion is so important. Because when people are in rebellion, there's no real fellowship.

Furthermore, dominion depends on fellowship, both with God and His children, because that's where our wisdom to rule comes from. Otherwise dominion will lead to dictatorship rather than the love and guidance of spiritual fathers. (Ex 19:5-6; Pr 8:11-16; Dan 5:18-31; Rev 1:6; 20:6)

The story of Joseph and Judah illustrates this principle perfectly, giving us a picture of how the end of this age will play out, like a roadmap to navigate safety through the terrible times ahead. Knowing our purpose will keep us on course.

Fellowship with God is how He reveals His secrets to those He depends on to "make things happen" on the earth. Because Abraham was God's "friend," He told him of His plan to destroy Sodom so he would intercede (pray, ask favor) for his nephew Lot. (Gen 18:17-33; 19:29)

Why did God need *justification* to rescue Lot and his family from the city? Because Satan looks for a reason to accuse God of *making things happen* whether we, His children, want Him to or not, and whether we really *care* for one another, as though God is a dictator, forcing us to do what's not in our hearts (*Job 1:9-11; 2:3-5; Gen 4:9; Ex 32:10-14; Ps 106:23; Ez 22:30; Jn 15:15; Jam 2:23; Ps 2:8-9*)

God also revealed His ways to Moses, another "friend." Through this intimate relationship, God used Moses to do all the "signs and wonders" it took to deal with Pharaoh, get the Israelites out of Egypt through the Red Sea, and then feed and care for them in the desert forty years. It wasn't easy, for they were as hard-headed as Pharaoh and *would have killed him* (Moses) if God had not intervened. And God would have killed *them* if *Moses* had not intervened—all part of Moses' training in preparation for this test, which continued to demonstrate to "principalities and powers" His *wisdom* in why He does what He does. (Ex 32:7-14; 33:11; Num 12:6-8; Dt 9; *Eph 3:10*)

Godly dominion is difficult or impossible without intimate fellowship with the *Lord our Shepherd, our High Priest, our Abba [Daddy] Father and Counselor*. Not to mention genuine fellowship with His children—our brothers and sisters in Christ. (Ps 23; 80:1; Is 9:6; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; Heb 5:10; Pr 11:14; 15:22; 24:6; Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:12; Eph 4)

Therefore the *real* kings in the Bible were not those who sat on physical thrones, because they were always botching

thing up, as they do today. Some kings would go to the prophets for advice and prayer and see tremendous victory, while others refused their advice and suffered humiliating and costly defeat. (1 Ki ch 17-18; 19:1-2; 2 Chr 16:7-14; ch 25; Is 37:5-7)

While I was teaching Revelation at Teen Missions in Florida in the 1990s, one of my students noted that Amos 3:7-9 relates to Revelation 10:1-3. I'd never noticed it before, but it agreed with the way I and many others understand Revelation: it is God wrapping thing up *through those He will use to make it happen!* (Ps 2:6-9; 48:2-8; Rev 2:26-27; 20:4)

"Can two walk together, unless they are agreed. . . . Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:3, 7-8; Rev 10:1-11; Is 45:11)

These verses set the stage for the book of Revelation, where in chapter ten the prophetic word is like a lion roaring, ready to claim his pray. Meaning, Christ is ready to reclaim His dominion over the earth (through His *unfit* saints), restoring peace and fellowship. That's why the story of Judah and Joseph (part 3a) is so critical to understanding the end times. (Rev. 19:10f; Gen 49:9-10; Ps 47:7-8; 48:1-8)

I don't understand the details and timing regarding the rapture of the saints; there's excellent teaching on the various views—pre-trib (rapture before the tribulation), mid-trib, post-trib, pre-wrath (rapture before the seventh trumpet, which begins the seven bowls of wrath), and multiple rapture—as the saints are ready (the view of my favorite commentary on Revelation—*The Apocalypse*, by Joseph Seiss, a great classic and still available on Amazon.com.)

With so many possibilities and because "now we see in a mirror, dimly," I decided it was safest to be ready for anything: *just be ready!* (Mt 24:42; 25:13; 26:41; Lu 12:37-40; 21:36; 1 Cor 16:13; 2 Tim 4:5; 1 Th 5:2-9; 1 Pet 4:7; 5:8; 1 Cor 13:12)

In the meantime I developed a *practical, workable* model that would fit any view and at the same time *prepare me* for God's ultimate purpose—reigning with Christ through intimate union with Him and His people. It's so simple, a child can "do it." (Mt 18:3-4; Lu 10:21; 18:16-17)

It's doing what Jesus said we should be doing until He comes: causing His will to "be done on earth as it is in heaven." People—especially in jail—pray these words in *The Lord's Prayer* almost daily with no idea what they're telling God, and on the verge of *blasphemy*, calling God's Name *holy* ("hallowed"), and after "prayer call," slinging that "Name above every name" in the mud through complaining and anger. (Mt 6:9; Ex 3:13-15; 20:7; Lev 24:11-16; Pr 30:9; 2 Cor 5:10; Php 2:9-10; Rom 14:10-12; 1 Pet 4:5; Jude 1:14-15; Rev 20:11-15)

It deeply troubles me when I hear them pray this *kingdom* prayer and I long to teach them the responsibility it involves. For it's a *model*—not a ritual prayer—of precious intimacy with God, inviting Him to take dominion *through us* over the events we face daily, using the authority of His Name with a humble and forgiving heart, victorious over temptation, feeding on His Word, our "daily bread." And ending with worship: "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." Wow! (Gen 32:26; Jos 10:12; Ps 2:8; Is 45:11; Lu 11:5-13; 18:1-8; Jn 15:7-8; 14:12-14; 16:24; 1 Jn 5:14-15)

For He gave Peter (and us) the "keys to the kingdom of heaven," that "whatever [we] bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever [we] loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Mt 6:10; 16:19; 24:42-51; ch 25; Lu 12:36-40).

Warning to powers of darkness: the King is here!

Jesus demonstrated this lifestyle for us, taking dominion over sickness, demons, and everything else that resulted from the fall of man, making "all things new" again! The book of

Acts shows the apostles maintaining this dominion, and there's no hint it was meant to cease, as some interpret "when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away" to mean. But since "knowledge" has not yet "vanished away," it would seem God's miracle working power has not either—*especially since it's an indication of the kingdom of God at work*. (Rev 21:5; Lu 10:9-11; 11:17-20; Acts 20:25; 28:23; 1 Cor 1:24; 2:4; 4:20; 13:9-10; Rom 1:16; 14:17; 15:19; 2 Th 1:5; Dan 2:44)

You are free to believe what you will and I have friends who disagree, but they are still my brothers in Christ, love God, and many are doing more to win the lost than I am. But I was raised in a Pentecostal environment with friends and relatives who experienced the miraculous through prayer enough to drive me to answer the question of whether it's the work of God or Satan. (Lu 11:15)

I went through a period in my youth where I attributed it all to the "psychic realm" no different than the occultic power of Eastern religion. But when I returned to faith in God, my belief that biblical miracles occur today eventually returned, and I've seen miraculous instantaneous healings in my own family. (Mk 16:17-18; Jn 14:12; 1 Cor 12:9; Jam 5:14-15; Ex 15:26; 23:25; Is 53:5; Ps 103:3)

If you're open to it, try to obtain a biography of Smith Wigglesworth or a book by Reinhard Bonnke or Heidi and Roland Baker (Amazon.com). They are among the more well known among those whose miracle-producing faith has become legendary. These, among many like them, but not as well known, are already *reigning as kings* in the spirit realm, taking *dominion* over demons, sickness, deformity, and even raising the dead. (1 Ki 17:17-24; 2 Ki 4:16-37; Mt 10:1, 8; Jn 11; Lk 10:9; Act 4:9-10, 30; 5:12-15; Rom 5:17)

God has given us authority over the works of darkness, wherever Satan attempts to destroy individuals, cities, and nations. The Cali Cartel is one of many examples, and perhaps illustrates how the Mexican cartels and other mafia-type organizations and terrorists will be dealt with as the saints rise up like Simba in Lion King when he faced off Scar and reclaimed the jungle. (Gen 32:26-28; Mt 11:12; Lu 16:16; 2 Cor 10:5; Eph 6:10-13)

(And by the way, prison and jail is the ideal place to wage serious spiritual warfare against the demonic powers of darkness behind these organizations and *nations* bent on terrorizing the world. That's what we're called to do, and inmates have the *time*—turning what Satan meant for evil into what God will use for good! Read the prayer examples in my article, "The Transformation of Elijah and Elisha." Gen 50:20; Ez 13:5; 22:30; Dan ch 9-10; 1 Ki 17:1; 18:42-44; Jam 5:17; 2 Cor 10:3-6; Eph 6:10-12; 1 Tim 2:1-3; Acts 4:24-31; 12:5-11)

Jorge Valdez, the Colombia Medellin drug cartel's number one American drug-kingpin, is responsible for 80 to 85 percent of the cocaine in the U.S. in the 1970's to the mid 80's, with all the destroyed families that spin off the illegal drug industry. Seized with guilt over the life he lived before his little daughter, and with the daily counseling of his Christian karate trainer, he finally turned to God. Now he's preaching the Gospel around the world, reaching types I could never reach (Valdez, George. *Coming Clean*. Colorado Sp: Waterbrook Press, 1999)

A Christian brother I met in prison came from a gang in Chicago. When he was third from the top, he realized you don't retire as the boss: you're assassinated. So he moved to the gangs in Tampa, hoping to live longer, but ended up in jail where he found Jesus. In prison he was a great blessing to the men around him, leading others to the victory He'd found. I enjoyed listening to him in his street lingo. But he's only one of many thousands like him, whom

God corralled to Himself through their failures. (1 Tim 1:12-13)

Kamal Saleem was one of the most dangerous terrorists in the Muslim Brotherhood. His first assignment at seven years of age was smuggling arms through Syria into Israel. He funded terrorist groups by his links with Arab sheiks and recruited many young men in America for terrorist training in the Middle East. He now also preaches the Gospel around the world with a serious commitment equal to his former dedication to Islam. And he linked up in ministry with two other ex-terrorists, one of whom worked for Yasser Arafat. (Saleem, Kamal. *The Blood of the Lambs*. New York: Howard Books, 2009)

These stories have multiplied all over the world by the thousands. But the same thing is happening on a city-wide and national scale. While Bible scholars analyze and interpret Scripture, others are “making them happen” through prayer and action. (Ez 33:31-33; Mt 7:24-27; Lk 8:21; Jam 1:22-25)

Almolonga, Guatemala, was an economically depressed city of bars, jails, drunks, and violence, under the demonic influence of an idol (demon) named Maximon. “The town, despite its small population, had to build four jails to contain the worst offenders,” and overflow prisoners would be transported to the nearest town.

In 1974, “a group of local intercessors got busy crying out to God” during “a series of prayer vigils that lasted from 7 P.M. to midnight.” God began setting people free, including the leader of the idol-cult, which left town. Churches, some with “more than 1,000 members” replaced most of the bars, and “in 1994 the last of Almolonga’s four jails was closed.”

Even the agricultural economy transformed with an “astounding 1,000 percent increase” in productivity. “Whereas before they would export four truckloads of produce per month, they are now watching as many as 40 loads a day roll out of the valley.” And the “produce is of biblical proportions,” like “five-pound beets, carrots larger than my arm and cabbages the size of oversized basketballs.” (Otis, George Jr. *Informed Intercession*. Ventura, CA: Renew Books, 1999. Print. 18-23)

Hamet, California, once “the methamphetamine manufacturing capital of the West Coast,” was a “center of witchcraft” and “a nest of cults.” Its suburb of San Jacinto had been plagued by youth gangs for more than a century.” But God responded to the prayers of its intercessors. Cult membership sank “to less than 0.3 percent of the population,” the drug business “has dropped by as much as 75 percent,” along with the “official corruption” that made it so easy. And gang members began turning to God, beginning with the leader of the notorious First Street Gang, followed by their members, who went about to clean things up, like the gang graffiti they’d posted all over.

By the late 1990s many city officials were Christians, including the “mayor, police chief, fire chief and city manager,” and “about 30 percent of local law enforcement officers and an exceptional number of high school teachers, coaches and principals. In fact, for the past several years nearly 85 percent of all school district staff candidates have been Christians.” The school district, once “the laughing stock of Southern California, now has one of the lowest drop-out rates in the nation.” And pastors, instead of criticizing one another, now work together, even swapping pulpits. (Ibid, 29-36) (Ibid refers to the last mentioned reference.)

Kiambu, Kenya, a few miles north of Nairobi, was a spiritually depressed town of reckless “alcohol abuse, untamed violence and grinding poverty.” But through the intercessory prayer of a few believers, God exposed the root of the problem, “a local witch named Mama Jane.” God answered, she left town, and the spiritual climate reversed

along with the economy. “They now enjoy one of the lowest crime rates in the country. Rape and murder are virtually unheard of.” Churches have grown, and the church where the prayer vigil began grew from a small number to 5,000 members. (Ibid, 48)

Understanding authority

The book of Judges records a recurring pattern: when God’s people get slack and end up with the same idols the enemy worships, He empowers the enemy to take over for a lengthy period of chastening until they cry out to God in desperation, sometimes for many years, before God finally hears and answers. (Dt 32:30; Jud 2-3, etc; 1 Sam 12:9; Ps 1, 26; Is 30:18-19; 50:1, 10, 11; 2 Cor 10:3-6).

Idols are whatever takes the place of God: He says if we love the world, we don’t have His love in us. “For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions” (1 Jn 2:16a NLT; Rom 12:1; Col 3:1-6).

If disobedience gave Satan dominion over the earth as “the god of this world,” then *obedience* reverses the “curse” and begins to restore the dominion God originally gave us. (Lu 4:6; Jn 14:30; 16:11; 1 Cor 10:20; Eph 6:12; 1 Jn 5:19)

Obedience covers the two areas Jesus said fulfill the whole law: loving God with all our heart, and loving others. Loving others is simply loving them with the love we get from God, because in ourselves we don’t have the ability to love others unconditionally. That’s why when people turned to God and began to forgive and love one another, God brought such victory in the above examples. (Mt 22:37-40; Lu 10:27; Jn 13:34; 15:10,12; Rom 13:8-10; Gal 5:6, 13-14; 1 Jn 4:7-8;)

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chr 7:14; Heb 11:6).

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! . . . For there the LORD commanded the blessing—Life forevermore” (Ps 133:1, 3b)

Not long ago a verse I’d memorized years earlier suddenly became *revelation*: “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him”(Col 1:16).

The first thing I noticed is that not one element of physical creation is mentioned as in other passages that speak of creation. I saw this verse as a picture of the spirit world.

When we step out of our bodies at death, we won’t be interested in the mysteries of the universe, of antimatter and black holes. For the entire creation is held together by God’s *authority in Christ*, and this little verse describes what it looks like in the spirit realm: high-ranking angels, as in Eph. 6:12 of evil ones: principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Dan 10; Col 1:17)

But Paul goes on to say how authority operates in the *visible* realm: “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence” (1:18; Eph 4:11-16; 1 Cor 11:3).

Authority in God’s kingdom takes the form of humility and submission because His rule is about caring for one another as the members of our physical bodies care for each other. The same is true for an army, where unity and support are vital, as any soldier well knows. (1 Cor 12:11-30; Eph 4:1-16; Php 1:27)

That’s why it’s so important to get involved, to find our place, our function, in the “Body of Christ.” This was the secret of the Roman centurion’s faith, for he was “under authority,” a link in the chain of command which went up through the ranks to the emperor to God! (Ecc 8:5-6; Rom 8:14; Mt 8:1-13; Jn

15:7; Eph 1; Col 1:26-28; Rom 13:1-5; Dan 4)

Someone in need is waiting for us to do our part in God’s network of helpers. And God will *empower* us as He did the disciples when they got in *one accord* . (Acts 2:1; 4:31-34; Rom 12; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4; Ps 133; 1 Pet 1:22; Rev 2:4)

If pride is our problem, Jesus set the example at the Last Supper when He washed the feet of His disciples, normally the job of the household slave. It was the evening before He would be crucified, and the disciples had been or would be arguing about who would be the greatest in His kingdom. (Jn 13:1-17; Lu 22:24-30; 9:43-48)

A “harmony of the Gospels” shows the order of events in the four Gospels in parallel. Some harmonies place the argument before Jesus washed their feet; others after. Either way, it’s shocking that after three years of listening to Jesus teach by instruction, stories, and examples, they still didn’t grasp what He meant by the Kingdom of God. All they saw was His *power* to make things happen, but didn’t understand *why* He did what He did—the *purpose* of authority. (Lk 10:17-21; Eph 1)

They had the idea of a some sort of a coup, where Jesus would seize control of the government and reign, with them seated on thrones, which is actually what Jesus said they would do. But they still didn’t understand the meaning of a throne in the heavenly kingdom. (Mt 19:28; Lu 22:30; Rev 20:4)

Jesus didn’t disqualify them or even reprimand them, but patiently explained that the purpose of authority in His kingdom is to *minister* to others. Then He added, “But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials” (Lu. 22:28).

Humbly serving others is not easy for most of us: we have to be humbled and broken. But “if we endure, we shall also reign with Him,” and if “we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” (2 Tim. 2:12, Rom. 8:17; Mt 19:28)

Earlier, on the way to Jerusalem, the mother of James and John had asked Jesus if her sons could sit on the right and left side of Jesus in His Kingdom, which she assumed, as did the disciples, would replace Roman dominion.

Jesus told her boys, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They replied confidently, unaware of the “cup” and “baptism” of suffering that lay ahead, “We are able.” (Mt. 20:20-23; Rom 12:10; 1 Cor 13:4; Phi 2:3-5; 1 Pet 5:5-6)

It’s not much different than the Christian idea that when Jesus returns, we’ll rule and reign with Him, which is true. But most of us have the same earthly concept of being in control the disciples had. We don’t realize we’re already supposed to be ruling with Him, and *our future reign will depend largely on how we deal with our present authority*.

Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the talents: those who are faithful to use and develop their God-given assets will be “rewarded” with more responsibility when His Kingdom “fills the whole earth” after His coming. (Mt 25:14-30; Lu 16:12; 19:12-27)

Scary times ahead:

Through the interaction of the members of His Body, the local church becomes a place of *guidance* and *protection*. This will become extremely important in the days of trouble ahead. David saw this clearly:

“One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple [guidance]. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock [protection]. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me” (Ps 27:4-6a; see Ps 48:1-9; 133; Pr 11:14; 24:6).

I know *church* is difficult, inconvenient, full of hypocrites, “all they want is money,” “it’s a fashion show,” and so on. But that’s more reason it’s such powerful *training* for the wisdom and complexities of our role as *royal priests*, fighting battles through spiritual warfare, not physical. (2 Cor 10:3-5; Eph 6:10-12; 1 Pet 2:9)

For all our attempts to deal with terrorism through war, even killing their top leaders, seem only to encourage and multiply them, especially since they have the backing of entire nations like Iran, Syria, Russia, and sometimes China. For taking vengeance in the natural without dealing with it in the *super-natural* is like primitive tribal warfare where vengeance is a vicious cycle of destruction that never ends.

The other day an inmate asked me what I thought about citizens arming themselves when the government becomes our enemy. I didn’t give him the answer he wanted, because I can’t imagine a true believer fighting his own government, no matter how bad it is, with *physical* weapons, or the New Testament writers would have mentioned it.

But they teach the opposite, despite having Nero as their “king”—the emperor most famous for his wickedness, who launched the first major Roman persecution against Christians, crucified Peter and beheaded Paul, and whose lavish spending is one of the causes of the fall of Rome (information available on many websites under “Nero”). (Rom 13:1-5; 1 Tim 2:1-4; Tit 3:1-2; 1 Pet 3:13-21)

Luke 22:36, where Jesus tells His disciples to buy swords, speaks of the change in attitude the world will have toward them—hatred and persecution. Other scriptures and most Bible commentaries agree it was not to be taken literally. (Mt 10:16-39; 23:34-36; 26:51-53; Jn 18:10-11; Php 1:29; Heb 10:32-34)

Furthermore, military battles are the *secondary* war; *spiritual* warfare is the invisible but *primary* one, fought through obedience and prayer. (Acts 8:1-3; Php 1:29-30; 2 Tim 2:3-13; Heb 10:32-36; 1 Pet 4:1-2; 12-19; Dan 7:25; 8:24; rev 13:7; 14:12)

Anyone who watched the movie *Saving Private Ryan* is familiar with the awful bloodshed on D-Day as five thousand ships unloaded their men and equipment into the artillery fire of the strongest military fortifications in history—the German concrete bunkers that lined the beaches of Normandy. (I only saw the beginning.)

A few of us read or heard about the fog that protected that huge Allied armada from German surveillance as they crossed a hundred miles of the English Channel until they got within a few miles of the shore.

But perhaps only those who read the book, *Reese Howells Intercessor* (available, by Norman Grubb) know the spiritual battle that waged all night in a small Bible school in Wales—students and teachers who fought through intense prayer. And *knew* Who caused the fog that saved many Private Ryans that day—the beginning of the end of World War II. (Mk 6:47-51; Lu 8:22-25)

Who knows how close we are now to the end of this present age. I’m not worried about marshal law, gun control, or “Fema camps”. My concern is to know God intimately, and be armed with “the power of *His* might,” the armor of truth, righteousness, faith, love, and “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit . . . for all the saints” (Eph 6:10-18; Zech 4:6; Jn 14:17; 15:21; 17:3; Php 3:10)

And intercession includes *praying for our government leaders, not despising them!* Because God uses them to bless or correct us, *according to our obedience!* (2 Pet 2:10-

12; Jude 1:8-10; Rom 13:1-5; 1 Tim 2:1-4; 1 Pet 3:13-17)

If Jesus is our Captain, our Commander in Chief, and we are “keeping rank,” having found our place in His Body, His Kingdom, how can we, His army of priest-kings—*lions* in the spirit—lose? Even death will be victory! (Rom 8:31-39; 1 Cor 15:54-55)

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